

Henry Valentine Phelps is believed to have been born about 1799 in Claiborne County, Tennessee. The 1850 Blount County Census shows him as 51 years of age. His father was Valentine Phelps, son of George Fulps who migrated to America from Europe in 1751. Among the spellings of the name are Fulps, Fulp, Felps and Phelps.

It is thought that he moved with his father to Illinois where he met and married Rhoda Lebow, daughter of John Lebow. Family records show that he left Illinois because of a family feud over his deceased father's estate. It is thought that he moved back to Claiborne County, Tennessee, and is seen in that County's 1830 census records living next door to his father-in-law, John, who relocated to Tennessee about the same time. Henry later moved his family to Blount County, Tennessee and is seen in that County's 1840 and subsequent census records.

Henry and Rhoda had eleven children and lived in the Middlesettlements Community of Blount County. He died sometime before 1860. Family records show that during a smallpox epidemic in the community, Henry dug graves for the victims. It is believed that as one of the few able bodied men in the community, he kept an empty grave dug in preparation for the next death. When he became ill and died of the disease, he was buried in a grave that he had dug himself.

Rhoda Phelps died in 1880. It is thought that Rhoda and Henry Phelps are buried in the cemetery at Middlesettlements Methodist Church in Blount County, Tennessee where there are several older unmarked graves.